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**THE U.S. EGYPTIAN
MILITARY / DIPLOMATIC
COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The world, in general, and the Middle East, in particular, are experiencing changes which few would have believed possible only a short time ago. The Middle East will be the key to oil production in the future. The region's strategic importance extends far beyond oil. Strategic waterways contain three critical checkpoints: the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb, and the Strait of Hormuz. The importance of Egypt to the United States is a function of the importance of the Middle East as a whole to United States interests. The fundamental interests of the United States and Egypt are congruent. The commonality of U.S. and Egyptian goals and the importance of close U.S.-Egyptian cooperation was illustrated by the international effort to liberate Kuwait. The political and military cooperation displayed at that time would not have been possible without a decade of close cooperation, joint training, and common military equipment. The success was not an accident but the result of more than a decade of working together. Stability in the Middle East is threatened by more than conflict between Arabs and Israelis. No other nation can have the regional influence of Egypt. Despite the changes in the world following the end of superpower rivalry, the Middle East continues to be a region of instability. In the aftermath of the Gulf War the U.S. has suggested that several steps be taken to promote stability in the region. It would be difficult for the GCC states to incorporate Iran in any way into their own security arrangements. Thus it is unlikely that any security arrangement based on the GCC could ensure stability. A future decision to intervene in the Persian Gulf would be complicated by many considerations. At the same time, however, Egypt under the guise of combined training exercises in joint cooperation area for training could legitimately allow the U.S. to locate some of its equipment on Egyptian soil without being seen as constructing permanent bases. Egypt has become a crucial factor in the development strategy in the Middle East. Therefore U.S. and Egypt should co-operate in the future.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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INTRODUCTION

The world, in general, and the Middle East, in particular, are experiencing changes which few would have believed possible only a short time ago. The end of superpower rivalry, the defeat of Iraqi aggression in Kuwait and the commencement of regional peace talks have led to a period of relative tranquility in a historically volatile part of the world.¹

The tremendous strategic and economic importance of the Middle East has never been in doubt.² It is crossroads of the world. It is the bridgehead to three continents and is one of the most important strategic areas in the world. It now has a new importance; it contains the last great oil field outside the western Hemisphere.³

The Middle East will be the key to oil production in the future. This region contains 66 percent of the world's known oil reserves. Five nations, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iran and Iraq, control 90 percent of those reserves. Reserves of easily recoverable oil in the U.S. and the Commonwealth of Independent States will be depleted in the 21st century. When this occurs, the Gulf region will still have over 100 years of proven reserves. Thus, any attempt to control access to Arabian Gulf Oil is a threat to regional and global security, and to U.S. vital interests.⁴

The region's strategic importance extends far beyond oil. Strategic waterways contain three critical checkpoints: the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb, and the Strait of Hormuz. In peacetime,

these sea lines of communication are essential to the smooth flow of world commerce. During conflict, they are critical to U.S. ability to deploy and sustain forces abroad.⁵

The importance of Egypt to the United States is a function of the importance of the overall Middle East to United States interests. The complex bilateral relationship that has developed between the United States and Egypt - that is so important to both nations politically, economically, and militarily - cannot, in terms of U.S. national priorities, be separated from its regional context.

Ever since the advent of the cold war the United States has recognized that it has vital interests in the Middle East. Successive administrations in Washington have defined those interests in classic geopolitical terms - the need for the United States and its allies to have unimpeded access to the sea and air routes and the energy resources of the area.⁶

To protect its interests, the United States, for over almost four decades has pursued alternating strategies in the Middle East. At times it has emphasized the perceived Soviet threat and the importance of developing its capability to counter that threat militarily. At times it has emphasized the search for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to eliminate that conflict as a factor checking instability which made it easier for the Soviets to establish positions of influence in the region.⁷

This study of U.S. Egyptian Military-Diplomatic cooperation

in the Middle East aims at analyzing the relationship between the U.S. and Egypt to show the importance of Egypt to U.S. interests in the Middle East and to show, why the U.S. and Egypt should cooperate in the future.

However, in order to appreciate how fundamentally U.S. Egyptian relations have been transformed in the post-Nasser era, but also to understand the residual memories of the era that occasionally color attitudes toward U.S. Egyptian relations today, it will be useful to trace briefly the highlights of the roller-coaster relationship of the pre-Sadat period.

The study is divided into two parts, in the first part we will examine the interests that the U.S. and Egypt have in common and how these evolved. We will then look at the cooperation between the two in the war with Iraq. The second half of the paper will take up the main problem, the sources of instability and the challenges to peace in the Middle East. Finally we will attempt to show why the U.S. and Egypt should cooperate in the future. The study assumes Egypt and the U.S. constitute a partnership for peace, stability, and progress. It is necessary, therefore, to start by examining the current U.S. Egyptian joint interests.

CURRENT U.S. EGYPTIAN JOINT INTERESTS

For many Americans, the Middle East ⁸ was not a pressing concern until the oil embargo in late 1973.⁹ After that it was no longer only a region caught up in squabbles among its member nations, but one that could touch the life of every American and threaten his lifestyle. The Middle East is today an arena of intense local rivalry, with the traditional strategic importance of the area now enhanced by its vast economic and financial power. It is a region of great natural resources, of great diversity where conflict and instability abound. The ultimate issues of world war or world peace will be affected by what transpires in the Middle East over the next decade.¹⁰

In myriad ways, America's goals, interests and prosperity over the next decade or so will depend significantly on its relations with, and the shape of, the world around it. With respect to the Middle East, events of the past several years have dramatically demonstrated the area's crucial importance for America's security and economic well-being, topics which are obviously vital to American interests and security. The critical choices America faces in its relationships to the countries of the Middle East must be based on an informed understanding of the area's current realities and future prospects.¹¹ For the United States, a good place to start is to recognize the benefits that accrue from the absence in Egypt of the kinds of problems that complicate U.S. relations with other strategically important

Third World countries.

Egypt has no nuclear weapons program and is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has significantly improved its record in the field of human rights. Egypt works closely with the United States and others to combat the international narcotics trade. Egypt has made important advances, especially under President Mubarak, toward establishing democratic institutions and reducing corruption in government. Egypt also plays a moderating role in such forums as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of African Unity, and the United Nations.¹²

We will now look at how the U.S.-Egyptian relationship came about; how stable the relationship is. And we will conclude with an attempt to identify the policy issues and choices for United States and Egypt.

U.S.-Egyptian relations from the time of Nasser: The 1952 revolution¹³ in Egypt came at a time of growing American focus on the strategic importance of the Middle East in its cold war confrontation with the Soviet Union. The revolution followed the establishment of the State of Israel four years earlier. Israel's defeat of the combined Arab military forces was a factor in discrediting the regime in Egypt and contributed to the government's downfall. One result of the revolution was Egypt's claim to leadership of the Arab World. Another was its challenge to the traditional regimes in Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia,

with which the United States had close and friendly relations.¹⁴

After the 1952 Egyptian revolution, the Eisenhower administration¹⁵ reached out to the new Egyptian leadership. The State Department had two strategic goals in mind. First, they hoped that Egypt would lead the Arab World into a peace settlement with the Jewish state under provisions established in the 1949 Armistice Agreements. Second they hoped Egypt would participate in planning for a Middle East Defense Pact¹⁶ to secure the region against a perceived Soviet threat. Unfortunately the American administration miscalculated both President Nasser's role and objectives as an Arab leader.

By the mid-1950s, against a background of rising tensions and pan-Arab nationalist sentiment, Nasser set Egyptian policy on a course diametrically opposed to the foreign policy objectives of the U.S. administration. When Egypt refused to enter into the Defense Pact, America failed in its attempt to organize the other Arab countries, so strong was Egypt's regional influence.¹⁷

In July 1956, Secretary of States Dulles announced the withdrawal of the U.S. offer to help finance the Aswan High Dam,¹⁸ which was to be a showpiece of the new Egypt. That was another glaring mistake in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

With Nasser's subsequent nationalization of the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company the stage was set for England, France, and Israel, each with its own grudge against Nasser, to launch a combined military attack against Egypt in October 1956. The U.S.

opposed this tripartite attack and pressed for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Egypt. This U.S. policy initiative led to a brief improvement in U.S.-Egyptian and overall U.S.-Arab relations. The roller coaster soon plunged downward again, however, as the Eisenhower administration renewed its effort to forge a regional anticommunist alliance (the Eisenhower Doctrine) on the area states.¹⁹ Nasser responded with the charge that this was nothing more than a clumsy American attempt to ensnare the Arabs in a neo-colonialist embrace.

Efforts early in the Kennedy administration to improve U.S. Egyptian relations soon ran aground on the shoals of the three sets of issues. First, there was Egyptian intervention in Yemen, Saudi Arabia perceived this as a threat to its security and sought U.S. protection. This invasion became a major factor in souring U.S.-Egyptian relations. Second, as the United States grew increasingly preoccupied with the war in Vietnam, Egypt, with its close ties to the Soviets, was perceived by many in Washington to be in the enemy camp. Third, a heightening of Arab-Israeli tensions themselves in part a by-product of inter-Arab rivalries combined with Nasser's miscalculated brinkmanship to ignite a war in June 1967. This was to become a major watershed in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Its repercussions in Egypt and throughout the area continue to this day. One important question must be asked, what is the influence of this war on the relationship between U.S. and Egypt? ²⁰

In Egyptian eyes, and Arab eyes generally, the United States

was aligned with Israel in its rapid and total defeat of the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian armed forces in the Six Day War of June 1967. As a result the roller coaster of U.S.-Egyptian relations plunged to a new and dramatic low. Cairo, along with most other Arab governments, severed diplomatic relations with Washington. Washington somewhat recouped by negotiating passage by the Security Council on November 22, 1967 of Resolution 242, still the only broadly accepted basis for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nonetheless mistrust between Egypt and the U.S. persisted.

During the first three years of the Nixon administration the United States actively participated in various peacemaking initiatives based on Resolution 242.²¹ Most of these focused on Egypt as the key country on the Arab side, and there were some limited successes. Notably the U.S. mediated a cease-fire in the summer of 1970 which successfully ended the escalating "War of Attrition" and stilled the guns, especially on the Suez Canal front.

The legacy of mutual suspicion and distrust that had accumulated during the Nasser era, however, continued to cast a shadow over U.S.-Egyptian relations until Nasser's death in September 1970. In a sense, Nasser's passing from the scene that he had dominated for much of preceding eighteen years cleared the air psychologically between Cairo and Washington.²²

When Anwar Sadat consolidated his position as Egypt's new president, he made clear that he wanted to open high-level

channels to Washington and to engage the United States actively in efforts to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Nixon administration, preoccupied with Vietnam and with pursuing U.S.-Soviet detente, did not regard Sadat's expectations as realistic. The United States did not think it could obtain concessions from Israel. Therefore, it was not prepared to expend the energy and political capital on Middle East peace efforts that Sadat proposed. In retrospect, the United States clearly underestimated Sadat's determination. It also failed to appreciate the significance of his 1972 decision to terminate the massive Soviet military presence in Egypt, in effect freeing his hand military vis-a-vis Israel.

In October 1973 Sadat played his ace in the hole. In collaboration with Syria and Saudi Arabia, he launched a military attack across the 1967 cease-fire lines and put the Middle East squarely on center stage as a crisis of major proportions.²³ In a very real sense 1973 was another watershed year, not only for the Arab-Israeli conflict, but for U.S.-Egyptian relations as well. The years that followed witnessed a dramatic, in some ways breathtaking, development of those relations. For the first time, policies based on shared regional and global views and objectives began to converge. Egypt and the United States agreed to work together for the ultimate goal of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.²⁴

The Carter administration, built on the groundwork laid by Henry Kissinger's intense diplomatic efforts during the

administrations of Presidents Nixon and Ford. Carter and Kissinger capitalized on the new opportunities created by Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, by working with Egypt and Israel to achieve the Camp David Accords in September 1978. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty followed in March of 1979.

These landmark agreements were by their terms intended to be steps in a continuous process toward the goal of overall Arab-Israeli peace. In reality, however, that goal, so important to both Cairo and Washington, did not evolve. None of the other Arab states has embraced peace with Israel. Thus the seeds are planted for future differences in U.S.-Egyptian relations. This cloud on the horizon notwithstanding, the dominant reality is that Egypt and the United States joined in 1973-79 and remain joined today in a commitment to work for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. Egypt and United States also share the objective of bolstering regional stability and the security of moderate Arab states against pressures generated by radical governments and movements in the area. Moreover U.S.-Egyptian cooperation for regional security has grown particularly close through a program of periodic military exercises in Egypt.²⁵

This brief review of the evolution of U.S.-Egyptian relations makes clear that, just as differences between the United States and Egypt over their respective approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to inter-Arab differences divided Cairo and Washington during the Nasser period, broad agreement

between them in these issues drew them together in the Sadat era. Before examining the extent to which this remains true, in the era of Sadat's successor, President Hosni Mubarak, it will be useful to examine in somewhat greater detail what interests of the United States are at stake in its relationship with Egypt.

United States interests in the Middle East:²⁶ The United States has two fundamental interests in the Middle East: reliable access, on reasonable terms and at tolerable prices to the oil of the region, especially the Arabian peninsula; the survival and security of the state of Israel. Each of these interests, taken alone, gives the United States a vital concern with the future of the Middle East; taken together, and considering as well the extreme volatility of the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict, they make the Middle East the most important -and the most dangerous- single region in the world from the standpoint of American interests.²⁷

The regional environment since Desert Storm presents new challenges and new opportunities. Even as United States provide badly needed relief and protection to refugees, it must continue promoting stability and the security of the area. We want next therefore to look at Egypt, usefulness to the U.S. in this regard.²⁸

Egypt as a pillar of U.S. policy: Egypt is a pioneer in developing the concept of peacekeeping, and is ready to respond to the call of the international organization for participating

in peacekeeping operations at the widest level and in the most dangerous locations and crises.

Egypt was one of the states at the forefront of drafting the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Egypt has declared an initiative regarding the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems.²⁹

Egypt's political weight, its high cultural status, its ties to the other Arab states -to Israel- all this enables Egypt to play an active role in the peace process; and to fulfill the legitimate demands called for under security council resolutions.

In the final analysis, the importance of Egypt to the United States is a function of the importance of the Middle East as a whole to U.S. interests. The complex bilateral relationship that has developed between the United States and Egypt and that is so important to both nations politically, economically, and in the security field cannot, in terms of U.S. national priorities, be separated from its regional context.

After examining the evolution of U.S.-Egyptian relations over almost four decades, and analyzing the U.S. interests, and after scrutinizing Egyptian policy in the Middle East, it is clear that Egypt has become an important factor in the development of a U.S. military strategy for the Middle East. Nothing could more graphically illustrate the importance of Egypt and of the new U.S.-Egyptian relationship to U.S. interests in

the Middle East. Therefore the study will apply this result in the Gulf.

U.S. Egyptian cooperation in the war with Iraq: At the very beginning of the crisis and before it turned into a brutal occupation of an Arab sister country, President Mubarak made every effort to bring about a peaceful solution to the Iraqi-Kuwait dispute. Unfortunately, President Saddam Hussein had certain designs which many of us had not anticipated and which might have gone beyond the occupation of Kuwait.³⁰

Egypt was the first country in the Arab world to condemn the occupation of Kuwait and to trigger, within the Arab League, the process of condemning the occupation and insisting on a complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate government.

Egyptian diplomacy had sought to prevent the invasion of Kuwait and, when Iraq violated its pledges to Egypt, President Mubarak was quick to call for an Arab league summit in Cairo and to rally support behind broad-based Arab opposition to the Iraqi aggression. This initiative was in keeping with Egypt's role as the largest Arab state and the host country of the Arab League, as well as its commitment to the peaceful resolution of regional disputes. Egypt's efforts were consistent with U.S. efforts to rally opposition to the Iraqi aggression. Indeed, Egypt's actions were an indication of the shared geopolitical objectives of the two countries and of most Arab, Muslim, and other countries which

joined the coalition to preserve Kuwait freedom.³¹

The cooperation between the U.S. and Egypt during the Gulf crisis decisively demonstrated the degree to which the relationship has matured into a true partnership based on shared goals and values for international order.³² Egypt has emerged from the Gulf crisis as a strong, confident partner prepared to play its natural role as the leader of the Arab world. Egypt and the U.S. share basic objectives and attitudes towards the security arrangements in the post-Gulf-War era. Only Egypt can play the key regional role in support of the shared interests of the two countries.

WHY U.S.AND EGYPT SHOULD COOPERATE IN THE FUTURE

The Gulf War has left the United States with the problem of protecting its security interests in the Persian Gulf for the long term. These interests include the continued supply of oil at a reasonable prices, and the prevention of a single power from gaining control over the bulk of the Gulf oil.³³

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the United States has suggested that several steps be taken to promote stability in the region. First, the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states should improve their overall defensive capabilities and accelerate the integration of their plans and programs for the defense of their territory. Second, the United States should strengthen its military ties with the GCC states and maintain a limited military presence on the Middle East. This presence would take the form of repositioned equipment, training missions, periodic deployments of air and naval units for joint exercises and the continued deployment of the U.S. Navy's Middle East Task Force in the Persian Gulf. Third, the United States should work with the GCC in developing a greater role for regional and extra-regional actors, principally Egypt and Syria. There can be no question of U.S. commitment to the stability of the Middle East and the security of the strategic oil resources and waterways. Egypt, however, remains a key ally, promoting regional stability.

This section analyzes the practical steps the U.S. believes are required to preserve stability and the prospects for the

successful implementation of U.S. strategy in cooperation with Egypt. One important question may be rightly asked at this juncture, "why should the U.S. and Egypt cooperate in the future?" It is necessary, therefore, to start by examining the sources of instability and challenges to peace in the region, and show how the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states could ensure a secure future and after that we show the problems of the American forward presence and combined exercises.

Sources of instability and challenges to peace in the region: The Gulf War was caused by a combination of the following: the simultaneous demands of Iraq's military procurement program, debt service, economic reconstruction and high levels of civilian consumption in a period of falling oil prices. At the same time, more deep-seated forces were work: confessional differences; ideological conflict; maldistribution of resources within the region. Two other factors have also undermined stability in the region: first, the fragile nature of states whose boundaries were drawn without regard to established settlement patterns of ethnic or religious groups; and, second, the Arab inter-state political order, in which interference in the internal affairs of one state by another is, to a large degree, regarded as legitimate. Beyond this, the structure of the balance of power in the region is a source-perhaps the most important source of instability.³⁴ It is hard to see that operation Desert Storm corrected any of these conditions.

Significant challenges to peace in this region remain. Iraq

and Iran continue to pose a great threat of aggressive action. Iraq remains intransigent and, despite enormous losses in the Gulf War, retains significant military capability with which to threaten its neighbors. Iran is moving quickly to restructure and rearm its military and remains a threat to the area states and to U.S. interests. The proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction among many countries in the region is also cause for great concern.

Since the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran has been rebuilding its military at an increasing pace in an effort to reestablish itself as a prominent regional military power. Iran has demonstrated its capability to threaten neutral shipping and the Gulf Cooperation Council states by conducting offensive naval and amphibious exercises in the Arabian Gulf.³⁵

While rebuilding its conventional forces Iran is concentrating on improving its missile and chemical weapons capabilities. It currently possesses Scud missiles provided by Korea and is attempting to acquire missiles with a free payload from China. Iran developed offensive chemical weapons and employed them in response to Iraqi chemical use during the Iran-Iraq War. Egypt is concerned that Iran may have embarked on a nuclear development program with a number of other countries. Iran could develop a viable nuclear weapons capability within the next decade. Iran will play an increasingly important role in the Gulf as its infrastructure modernizes and oil exports increase. It is attempting to establish itself as a major regional power by

expanding relations with post war Afghanistan and the Commonwealth of Independent States.³⁶

Iraq lost much of its military power in the Gulf War, but still retains significant capability. Its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons production and research capabilities were found to be far greater than originally estimated. Saddam Hussein remains a long-term threat to regional countries and, if given the opportunity, will foment instability and discontent.³⁷

Baghdad continues to speak out against U.S. renewed prestige and ties in the region, claiming these will result in a permanent U.S. presence of the Arabian Peninsula. It also remains a determined foe of Israel.

After examining the source of instability and challenges to peace in the region, the study will now attempt to focus on the practical steps, that are required to preserve stability and security in the region.

Steps toward stability; in theory, there are several possible ways in which security in the Gulf region could be organized. Hegemony is one possibility. A second would be a functioning balance-of-power system, consciously sought by states and achieved more or less purposefully. This system, which would be loose and informal, would lead to *ad hoc* alignments and shifts based on particular threats. A third possibility is collective security.

In highly evolved form, collective security assumes the existence of a community that shares a common interest in dealing

with aggression or threats from any quarter. In addition, collective security requires a consensus approach to what constitutes a threat and some mechanism or institution coordinating responses. To deter aggression, there must be an advance commitment to respond to aggression wherever it originates.³⁸

Ensuring a secure future to the Gulf states: In the immediate aftermath of the war against Iraq, the GCC attempted various solutions to the defence problems of the region. In 1991 the GCC states and Egypt and Syria drew up a plan under which large Egyptian and Syrian military contingents would be permanently stationed in the Gulf region, mainly Kuwait, as a deterrent against outside aggression. In return the GCC countries would provide much needed capital support for the weak economies of Egypt and Syria.³⁹

However, very shortly after the plan was agreed by all concerned it began to fall apart. Saudi Arabia, particularly, had second thoughts and questioned the immediate need for foreign troops, even Arab, being stationed in the Kingdom. Thereupon Egypt, presumably aware of the Saudi reservations, unilaterally pulled its troops out of Gulf.

Kuwait, announcing that it would not grant permanent military bases to the United States, nevertheless officially requested Egypt to station troops in Kuwait. Egypt did not respond and little more was heard of the proposition. In May, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ordered the withdrawal of

Egypt's 38,000 troops from the Gulf, realizing that, in the absence of any follow-up to the Damascus Declaration, these were not apparently going to constitute the projected "nucleus for an Arab peace force". Their continued presence in the region presented a drain on Egyptian military and financial resources to no very useful end. In June, Syria began the withdrawal of its own troops from the Gulf states for similar reasons.

Last September the chiefs of staff of the six GCC member states met in Oman to review defence plans. By then it was apparent that the earlier plan for a GCC joint defence force, with Egyptian and Syrian contingents was moribund. It was natural, therefore, that during 1991, as the idea of incorporating Egyptian and Syrian forces in a combined Gulf security force faded, the possibility of establishing a purely GCC-based force began to be explored. Sultan Qabus of Oman was charged with investigating this possibility. By October 1991, the Omani plan had taken shape. It envisaged a force of more than 100,000 troops, with a command independent of any one of the GCC's member governments, answerable collectively to the GCC. The implications of this were not enthusiastically received by the other GCC states' rulers because any co-operation depends upon the extent to which interests will be sufficiently similar so as to make co-cooperation meaningful, useful and non-threatening. At the twelfth GCC Summit in Kuwait in December 1991, Sultan Qabus was thanked for his efforts, and the GCC states effectively shelved the plan.

Given the nature of the GCC, it was not surprising that the plan for a collective security force was not greeted with great enthusiasm by the rulers of these states. In regional as in domestic politics, they have displayed a marked reluctance to commit themselves to any form of institutional arrangement that might in the future tell them what they can and cannot do. It is this that has always given the GCC a ghost-like quality. In the case of Oman's plan, it was the implied loss of individual autonomy that made it unacceptable. Even in the absence of severe disagreements, the idea of handing control over some of their resources to their fellow rulers would be a difficult decision for most GCC rulers to accept.

Kuwait, with yet another change of mind about defence policy, said at the Oman meeting that a continued Western military presence in the Gulf was essential for regional security. Confirming its policy shift, Kuwait signed a unilateral ten-year formal agreement with the U.S., under which the United States is authorized to store weapons and equipment in Kuwait and to conduct joint exercises with the Kuwait defence forces.⁴⁰ The agreement also permitted the U.S. to call on Kuwait for logistic support in the event of further military operations on the Gulf, including the use of the emirate's ports and airfields.

The GCC has, officially, expressed the view that Iranian participation is essential for the success of any regional security set-up, but there is no clear-cut opinion among the six states as to how an Iranian presence fits in with existing ideas.

Egypt, still technically an active partner in the Gulf security scene, is known to be opposed to Iranian participation.

Conversely, the United States has said it believes Iran should have an active role in regional defence matters.⁴¹

Throughout 1991 and 1992, any gathering of GCC foreign ministers could be guaranteed to make some positive reference to increasing its co-operation with Iran, to the need for strengthening ties and to the common interests of Iran and the GCC in the security and stability of the Gulf. It was clearly important for the GCC states that they should ensure that Iran was informed of, even if not integrated into, any security arrangement in the Gulf.

It would be difficult for the GCC states to incorporate Iran in any more systematic way into their own security arrangements. In the first place, these have tended to be unilateral in nature and, insofar as they involved security co-operation with the West, they have been severely criticized by Iran. Second, it seems to be more important for the GCC states to keep channels open to Iran. It is unlikely that they will come to trust Iran—quite apart from the populist rhetoric of the regime, as well as its claims to have a better sense of Islamic obligation than others, the very size and weight of Iran will keep alive fears of a constant ambition to exercise Iranian hegemony in the Gulf.

There is a consensus that some kind of regional defence arrangement is essential for the assured future of the countries of the Gulf. But the differences of opinion on even the

modalities and the lack of a decision on what its foundations should be show just how difficult the establishment of regional security system is proving to be.

Now, having shown that the GCC states cannot assure stability, the study will focus on the practical steps the U.S. and Egypt could take to secure this goal, beginning with the forward presence.

The forward presence: forward presence fosters U.S. credibility, strengthens deterrence, and facilitates transition from peace to war. Because naval forces provide the bulk of U.S. long term forward presence, access to ports and airfields is essential. Presence is enhanced through ongoing military-to-military interaction, cooperative defence measures, and pre-positioning of equipment and supplies critical to U.S. responsiveness and war fighting flexibility.

The United States desire to maintain a presence on the peninsula is not new. The idea that the United States might have to defend its interests using its own forces with assistance of friendly states in the region emerged in the last year of the Carter administration. It was clear to U.S. military planners, however, that without logistical support of U.S. forces and access to forward staging areas from which to fight, there was little hope of defending the region against a determined attack. These concerns were intensified by a shortage of sealift and airlift; by the large amounts of materiel required to sustain high-intensity warfare; by the long distances between ports in

the U.S. and the Gulf; by the uncertainty of overflight rights and use of bases en route for refueling and maintenance; and by the need to move quickly should a sudden threat emerge.⁴²

The presence of Christian soldiers on Arab lands, it was argued, would constitute an affront to Islam and Arabism that would ultimately undermine the stability of the very regimes an American presence was meant to safeguard.⁴³

Because of the Gulf War, people in the countries of the Persian Gulf had begun to accept the presence of foreigners in their midst. This attitudinal change was most dramatic in Kuwait, but less so in Saudi Arabia, where Islam's holiest shrines are located. The almost universal realization by the Gulf populations that, without these foreign men and women, they stood little chance of frustrating Iraqi ambitions meant that the idea of an American presence was no longer considered egregious or necessarily destabilizing.⁴⁴

Now, it is important to look more closely at the pre-positioning and examine a variety of considerations that figures in the positions taken by countries in the region and in the process to emphasize the role of Egypt at the political center of the Arab world and to show why the U.S. and Egypt should cooperate to solve problems in the region.⁴⁵

1. Security concerns: A host country may take the view that the storage of U.S. military equipment in depots on its territory will increase the likelihood of its being attacked in a crisis. From the Egyptian viewpoint, there is no likelihood of its being

attacked in a crisis.⁴⁶

2. Reluctance to enter into signed agreements: Some host countries have argued that written agreements are unnecessary, given their shared security interests with the United States. Pointing to the existence of the necessary facilities and a history of co-operation in the areas of the logistics or operational support, they may question why these activities need to be made the subject of a signed agreement. These attitudes present two problems for the U.S.: first military planners maintain that they cannot incorporate into operational plans the availability of pre-positioned stocks and the ability of U.S. forces to stage from certain bases unless the U.S. has been guaranteed secure access to them; second, Congress will not appropriate funds for military construction (normally required at the pre-positioning site to store U.S. equipment at established standards of safety and reliability) in the absence of a signed agreement.⁴⁷

The U.S. Defense Department had planned to leave behind in the desert kingdom a division's worth of tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and other military equipment. The Saudis reportedly considered this stockpile, with its attendant personnel, unnecessarily large and too visible. But Egypt did not refuse to store any equipment.

3. Restrictions on how the equipment may be used: The guarantee of secure access is an essential part of any agreement for both planning purposes and legal reasons. A guarantee of this

kind is difficult for a host country to make because it might appear to constitute a diminution of sovereignty. Host countries may seek to assert this authority by asking for elaborate advance notification procedures before U.S. military personnel could enter to inspect, withdraw, maintain or use stockpiled equipment. Egypt will do the same policy but if America's objectives are compatible with Egypt, there is no reasons to expect restrictions will be set.

4. Restrictions on the nature of pre-positioned materiel: It usually reflects a distinction between lethal and non-lethal equipment. Because such large quantities of non-lethal equipment are required to support forward deployment, the restrictions on storage of lethal stocks would not necessarily impede completion of pre-positioning agreement. Such restrictions, therefore, would be unlikely to preclude an agreement.⁴⁸ But Egypt will not put any distinction between lethal and non-lethal equipment -only the mass distraction weapons- if its purpose in co-operation with the Egyptian armed forces.

When the issues reviewed above do arise, they tend to reflect overlapping differences in foreign policy objectives, strategic cultures, negotiating styles, and approaches to sovereignty. After examination the problems of forward presence we have to examine the combined exercises. In the future it will be very difficult to maintain an active forces sufficient to meet worst case requirements, because of the shrinking force structure and reduced budget. Therefore the U.S. is going to depend on the

Reserve Component. If the reserve is to be a viable part of the U.S. forces in the region they must be exercised. The exercises are very important to training forces and to deter aggression. One important question should be asked and that is, where and with whom must the exercise be conducted ? The study attempts to examine the combined exercises to answer this question.

- Combined exercises; these are designed to provide the primary foundation for developing strong military-to-military relations and increased coalition training opportunities. Support for combined exercises is essential to solidify the military relationship, demonstrate the commitment and capability to defend U.S. interests, and supplement the standing naval presence with short term, air and ground force deployments to the region.⁴⁹

The problem could be alleviated by holding frequent large scale exercises, which would promote the main aims of U.S. policy in the area, to deter potential aggressors, reassure U.S allies and assist them to defend themselves.⁵⁰

However, funding for these exercises will not be forthcoming for some time, and there is nowhere in the region to conduct the necessary size maneuvers other than Egypt. The other states simply lack the space, or if they are sufficiently large, they lack the necessary infrastructure to support the exercises.⁵¹ This brings up an additional matter related to the propose of these maneuvers. Since Saudi Arabia refuses, for religious reasons, to allow the establishment of land base on the

peninsula, where should the exercises be held ?

The only ground exercise option other than Kuwait is Bright Star in Egypt. The Bright Star series of joint exercises also provided the U.S. Armed Forces with its most extensive firsthand experience of deployment to, and operations in, a desert country. From B-52 bombing operations to such elementary matters as interoperability with friendly Arab forces, Bright Star and other elements of cooperation with U.S. Central Command are an essential prelude to the experience of deploying large numbers of troops to the Gulf. The U.S. had planned for Gulf contingencies since the late 1970's, but only Egypt regularly participated in large-scale rapid deployment exercises with the U.S. Central Command, facilitating such a deployment. Without these exercises, Desert Storm would have been less certain of success.

While Egypt offers somewhat more in the way of maneuver space, it has never involved significant forces of other nations. It would be useful if the present Bright Star exercise could include the Saudis. Ambassador Richard W. Murphy, Senior Fellow, Middle East Studies, Council on Foreign Relations, disagrees with this idea because the Saudis refuse to participate in any exercises outside the GCC states for religious and other reasons.⁵² But this study examines this idea and it is clear that the only way to perform good combined exercises in the future is in Egypt with Egyptian Armed Forces.

There remains the question of whether the U.S. will have the military capability to intervene in a future contingency. To

execute its part in Desert Storm, the U.S. deployed 10 Army and Marine divisions, eleven Air Force wings and six carrier battle groups; yet, it still retained large residual forces that could have been used in simultaneous contingency operations elsewhere. As a proportion of the total active component of the armed services, the deployment required less than half of all available Army divisions, tactical air wings and carriers. This force is going to be cut by a very large margin during the next five years.⁵³ A future decision to intervene in the Persian Gulf would be complicated by this consideration.⁵⁴

A joint co-operation area for training: The political climate in Egypt will not permit the U.S. to pre-position combat equipment within the country's borders. However, storing exercise equipment in Egypt is different from pre-positioning war stores in the country. So, where should or could the U.S. store military equipment, stage aircraft, or berth ships in order to conduct training exercises ? One area might be the Red Sea region. Call it the "Bright Star Combined Forces Training Area." There, under the guise of combined training exercises, Egypt could legitimately allow the U.S. to locate some of its equipment on Egyptian soil without being seen as constructing permanent bases.

But what about the public reaction to this idea? The public reaction in Egypt is divided into four sections: first, The ruling party group, which will agree to this idea without any conditions. Second, The ruling party group of the parliament, which is preoccupied with economics problems. Third, the

opposition group in the Peoples' Assembly, who generally disagree with whatever the government proposes--however, this group is weak. Last, the opposing group out of the Peoples' Assembly, which contains the professors, university students, members of unions and some people of the fundamentalism groups. These disagree practically with all governmental proposals, as being contrary to their principles or religions.

It is possible to estimate the public reaction in this way--more than 70% of the people would be likely to agree with the government solutions, approximately 10% would oppose without proposing an alternative solution, and 20% oppose the government on principle. The conclusion, therefore would be that while opposition would exist, it could be handled. The thing to do is not make an issue of this. If questions are raised, the agreement could be made that no one is thinking of establishing a base; we are merely organizing a combined U.S. Egyptian control for training area use.

Egypt has become a crucial factor in the development of the U.S. military strategy in the Middle East. Egypt was, and still is, one of the largest Arab states in terms of territory, population and military capability. Therefore, Egypt remains the country to be reckoned with concerning Middle East issues must focus on Egypt as the principal diplomatic leader in the region.

CONCLUSION

Across the thirty dynasties of pharaohs studied at length and with care in the 19th Century by various schools of thought, politicians considered that all was known about Egypt. The modern reality of this state was scarcely taken into consideration in immediate post-W.W.II geopolitical analyses.

Now, from Nasser to Mubarak via Sadat, the whole world has had to accept the evidence that Egypt has been, is, and will remain the country without which, nothing durable can be achieved in the Middle East.

Whatever Egypt's strategic options and political regime, it will remain one of the largest Arab states in terms of territory, population, and military capability, a country to be reckoned with in the world and particularly among Arab countries.

Freedom from foreign political domination and military presence, in a word nonalignment is an important legacy of the revolution and the 1973 war. As such, they are source and symbols of national pride. Against this historical background, attempts to persuade Egypt to enter formal military basing or similar agreements are unnecessary and unproductive irritants.

United States interests in strategic cooperation with Egypt will prosper better if it does not seek to formalize such cooperation but is satisfied to let it develop on a de facto basis.

Egypt has become an important factor in the development of

the U.S. military strategy for the Middle East. Nothing could more graphically illustrate the importance-indeed the centrality-of Egypt and of the new U.S.-Egyptian relationship to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Egypt faces significant international challenges. As the largest state, the geographic keystone of the region, and the owner of the Suez Canal, Egypt will always be crucial to Middle Eastern security. When the Gulf crisis erupted, Egypt showed its capabilities as a coalition builder. No other Arab country possesses both the military strength and the diplomatic weight to have assembled the Arab members of the coalition in the manner Egypt did. Egypt will continue to play this role.

The main interest to the U.S. in the Middle East is, reliable access, on reasonable terms and at tolerable prices to the oil of the region, especially the Arabian peninsula, but the GCC states could not ensure a secure future.

The only ground exercise option other than Kuwait is Bright Star in Egypt. It would be useful if the present Bright Star exercise could include the GCC states.

A future decision to intervene of the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf would be complicated by many consideration, therefore the idea of creating a joint co-operation area for training in Egypt is a good one.

Under the guise of combined training exercises, Egypt could legitimately allow the U.S. to locate some of its equipment on Egyptian soil without being seen as constructing permanent base.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, United States-Egyptian Military Cooperation, Request for Military Assistance Fiscal Year 1993, p.1.

² Notes and Lessons on operation in the Middle East. Military intelligence. War Department Washington, January 30, 1943. Campaign study No.5 MID 461, p. 1-2.

³ The Middle East provides 70 percent of the world's supply of oil; that oil fuels an increasing interdependent global economy. Eleven percent of U.S. total oil requirements come from the area. This region supplies 27 percent of west Europe and 63 percent of Japanese national requirements.

⁴ General Joseph P. Hoar, Complex factors defy predicting Middle East future. USMC, Reserve Officer Association, National Security Report. September 1992.

⁵ Ibid ROA: U.S. moved 95 percent of its requirements by sea during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Had the use of these sea lines of communication been denied, its only alternative would have been to move supplies and equipment around the Cape of Good Hope with a 40 percent increase in transit times and a commensurate increase in cost.

⁶ Alfred Leroy Atherton, Jr. Egypt and U.S. Interests p.5. Foreign Policy Institute. Washington, D.C. March 1988.

⁷ Secretary Baker's prepared statement before the Senate Foreign relations Committee, Washington D.C. February 1, 1990. "Nowhere have our efforts been more intensive than in the pursuit of a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Over the past year, we have sought to create a process that would break the decades, old confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians and entire Arab world. And we have had results. Working closely with both Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo to discuss elections for Palestinian on the West Bank and Gaza.

⁸ In 1957 a national policy, the so-called Eisenhower doctrine, was established to provide for American military and economic aid to nations in "the general area of the Middle East," to use the language of the Congressional resolution. Committee of the House and Senate naturally asked Secretary of State Dulles to define the region where the United States was prepared to act. Mr. Dulles furnished a reasonably exact definition of the Middle East: "The area lying between and including Libya in the west and Pakistan on the east and Turkey on the north and the Arabian peninsula to the south," plus the Sudan and Ethiopia. He assessed that "Middle East" and "Near East" were now, in his view, identical. With this understanding, the resolution passed both

houses.

Richard H. Nolte, The Modern Middle East, p. 14. New York : Atherton Press 1963.

⁹ On October 17, 1973, ten days after the outbreak of the forth Arab-Israeli War, the Arab oil ministers met in Kuwait with the declared purpose of deciding how best to deploy the oil weapon in support of the military war of liberation undertaken by Egypt and Syria. They agreed to cut oil production by at least 5 percent monthly until Israel's evacuation of the all Arab territory occupied during the June 1967 war and the achievement of the rights of Arab Palestinians, or until further cuts would be detrimental to the national and Arab policies of the producing countries. The Arab Response to the Challenge of Israel, Boutros-Ghali, The Middle East: Oil Conflict & Hope A.L. Udovitch, p.235.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.xiii

¹¹ Ibid. p.1.

¹² Loc. cit. Alfred Leroy Atherton, Egypt and U.S. Interests.p.19 FPI.

¹³ The post-World War II program of Ahmed Hussein's Socialist party contains most of the programmatic ideas eventually espoused by the Free Officers. See Tariq al-Bishri, the Political Movement in Egypt: 1945-1952 (Egyptian General Book Org.,1972) pp. 389-415.A.

¹⁴ Loc. cit Egypt and United States Interests.p.1-2

¹⁵ Message from President Eisenhower to Congress January 5, 1957. Loc. cit. Documents on the Middle East. p.86.

¹⁶ Six Major Policy Issues: Speech by Secretary of States Dulles, June 1, 1953. Loc. cit Documents. p. 78.

¹⁷ Middle Eastern Leadership. Morroe Berger, Loc. cit The Middle East Oil. p. 121.

¹⁸ United States withdraws from the Aswan High Dam Project: Announcement by the Department of State, July 19, 1956. Documents on the Middle East edited by Ralph H. Magnus, p.103. "At the request of the Government of Egypt, the United States joined in December 1955 with the United Kingdom and with the World Bank in an offer to assist Egypt in the construction of a High Dam on the Nile at Aswan. This project is one of great magnitude. It would require an estimated 12 to 16 years to complete at a total cost estimated at some \$1,300,000,000, of which over \$900,000,000 represents local currency requirements.

It involves not merely the contributory, including Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda.."

¹⁹ Message from President Eisenhower to Congress January 5, 1957 op, cit Documents, p.86.

²⁰ FPI Policy Briefs March 1988, Egypt and U.S. Interests, Alfred Leroy Atherton, Jr,p.2

²¹ The United Nation Peace plan: Security Council Resolution Passed Unanimously, November 22, 1967, op.cit Documents, p. 205.

²² Although Sadat was obliged to sign a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union as the price for continued support, by mid-1972 he was ready to move independently. With little advance notice, he asked the Soviet to withdraw the bulk of their military advisers in July 1972; almost immediately he secretly contacted the Nixon administration. See Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Little, Brown, 1979)pp.1292-1300; and William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions:American Policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1967-1976 (University of California Press, 1977) ,pp.152.

²³ "In 1973 over Israel's refusal to raise the siege of the Egyptian Third Army in the Sinai Desert. Brezhnev put paratroopers on transports intending to fly then to the siege area. His action drove president Nixon to call a nuclear alert." Oil and the new world system: CENTCOM rethinks its Mission,pp.2.

²⁴ As noted, the present American-Egyptian relationship is a product of the October 1973 war and its immediate aftermath. Sadat went to war with the objective of drawing the two superpowers into the diplomatic arena, hoping that they would then broker a settlement of the conflict with Israel. To fight the war, Sadat had needed Moscow. But to reach a settlement of the conflict, he needed Washington."The United States & Egypt William B. Quandt. pp. 6.

²⁵ FIP Policy Briefs op. cit. pp.4.

²⁶ The United States in the Middle East, Interests and obstacles, Seth P. Tillman chapter II.pp 43-60.
-National Security Strategy of the Unites States. August, 1991.
-ROA, National Security Report, October 1992.

²⁷ The regional environment since Desert Storm presents new challenges and new opportunities. Even as we provide badly needed relief and protection to refugees, we will work to bring about greater security and a lasting peace. Ibid National,pp.45.

²⁸ The United States in the Middle East, op, cit,pp. 45.

²⁹ Statement of H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa the foreign minister of Egypt before the 47th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, September 25, 1992.

³⁰ The Prospects for peace, security and economic development in the Middle East in the after math of the Gulf crisis, by Dr Mohammed I. Shaker, Egypt's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, (Summary of Speech at the British Conservative Party foreign Affairs forum, February 25, 1991.pp. 14.

³¹ Confidential/Noform, The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, United States-Egyptian Military cooperation request for Peace, Stability and Progress, pp.1.

³² Ibid, pp. 2.

³³ Steven Simon. U.S. Strategy in the Persian Gulf-Survival vol, 34, No 3 Autumn 1992 p,1.

³⁴ U.S. Strategy op. cit., pp.2

³⁵ ROA op. cit. pp. 5.

³⁶ At the statement of H.E. MR. Amer Moussa the foreign minister of Egypt before the 47th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 25 September 1992. "In the Gulf region, which is part of the Middle East, we are witnessing new tensions on its eastern frontiers, manifested in the occupation by Iran of Arab Islands, the latest of which was Aboumussa Island. This we cannot overlook or ignore. We therefore call upon Iran to reconsider her position on their issue, and to adhere to the principles of good-neighborliness and to respect the norms of international law and to restore the situation to the status-quo Ante." pp. 14.

³⁷ Loc. cit, ROA.

³⁸ Shahram Chubin, Iran and regional security in the Persian Gulf. Survival, vol. 34, no. 3 Autumn 1992, pp. 34-35.

³⁹ John Christie. Saudi Arabia Special Report, Ensuring a secure future. The Middle East. February 1991. Issue No:208. Special Report on Saudi Arabia.

⁴⁰ Charles Tripp. The Gulf states and Iraq. Survival, vol. 34, Autumn 1992, pp. 43-61.

⁴¹ John Christie. Ensuring a secure future. The Middle East. February 1992 Issue No:208. p.IV.

⁴² Loc. cit Steven Simon p. 88

⁴³ The United States in the Middle East: The Gulf War and its Aftermath by Adeed Dawisha. January 1992. Current History A World Affairs Journal. The Middle East, p.3

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

"On a visit to the Gulf in May 1992 Cheney told reporters that he had reached "broad agreement" with the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qataar, and the United Arab Emirates- on the storage of United States military equipment in the region, and on joint military exercises involving American troops. Cheney announced that the detailed arrangements between the United States military and each Gulf state were to be negotiated in the next months."

⁴⁵ Egypt's Strategic Mideast Role, by Hoyt Gimlin, Reproduced with permission, Congressional, Inc., Editorial Research Reports, 24 February 1989, vol, No. 8.

⁴⁶ This view may sit side by side with recognition that the purpose of any access and pre-positioning agreement is to enable the U.S. and the host country come under threat. The host may seek to offset this increased risk by having a US security commitment built into the agreement. From the US view point, however, there are constitutional barriers to the advanced commitment of US military forces to the defence of another country. An agreement incorporating such a provision might well be regarded by Congress as a defence treaty, which would require the advice and consent of the US Senate.

⁴⁷ This attitudes present two problems for the U.S.: first, military planners maintain that they cannot incorporate into operational plans the availability of pre-positional stocks and the ability of U.S. forces to stage from certain bases unless the U.S. has been guaranteed secure access to them' second, Congress will not appropriate funds for military construction in the absence of a signed agreement.

⁴⁸ The attempt to impose formal restrictions on the redeployment of pre-positional equipment may also reflect a concern that the U.S. will use equipment stored in the host country for purpose that are incompatible with the host country's objective. As a rule, such attempts to impose restrictions on the use of stockpiled materiel are unacceptable to the U.S.

⁴⁹ ROA. op. cit. p. 7.

⁵⁰ Stephen C. Pelletiere. Douglas V. Johnson II. Oil and the new world system: Centcom rethinks its mission. August 15, 1992. p. 26.

⁵¹ Oil and the new world system. op. cit. p. 9.

⁵² The information in this section was obtained during the meeting with ambassador Richard. W. Murphy, Senior Fellow, Middle East Studies Council on Foreign Relation, December, 28, 1992, N.Y

⁵³ The base force put forward by General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and incorporated into the U.S. President's budget request for fiscal year 1993, is one-third smaller than the current force, which has been decreasing since the end of the Reagan administration. The base force will include 12 active duty army divisions; 15 tactical aircraft wings (out of a total of 26 air force wings); and 450 ships, including 12 carrier battle groups. The base force would also contain a larger number of cargo planes and ships to facilitate the rapid movement of troops and equipment to the Gulf.

⁵⁴ United States strategy, op. cit. p. 92.

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